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## **MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE**

The Ormond Beach area is very unique. The beach and the wetlands are home to several endangered species of birds, fish, and plants. However, they are threatened by development and pollution such as litter and the toxins that companies like Halaco release into the two environments. I suggest that steps be taken to reduce the trash on the beach and in the wetlands, actions be taken against Halaco to stop their release of toxins into the ecosystem, and changes be made to transform the wetlands into an ecotourist site without damaging their natural beauty or habitat.

The Ormond Beach wetlands are home to several endangered species, such as the Beldings Savannah Sparrow, the American Peregrine Falcon, the California Least Tern, the Western Snowy Plover, and the tidewater Gobi. The wetlands and the beach are in peril because of pollution. There are abandoned, wrecked cars, clothing, diapers, trash, and bags, just to name a few of the things littering the wetlands and the beach. I have participated in trash cleanups on Ormond Beach. However, much of the trash could be prevented from reaching the beach by putting filters across the drainage channels that drain into the beach and wetlands. The filters could be cleaned by city or county personnel regularly.

Halaco, a metal recycling plant, is located next to the wetlands. On the property of Halaco is a huge slag heap, which literally spills into the wetlands. Some of the slag heap is radioactive. At the recycling plant, they release toxic ammonia into the water of the industrial drain that leads to the estuary at Ormond Beach. Some of the dust on the property at Halaco contains a toxic metal called hexavalent chromium. One idea is to get

some money from the government's "toxic cleanup superfund" to pay for the clean up of the toxic waste.

The wetlands are made up of a fresh water marsh and a salt water marsh inhabited by a variety of flora and fauna. The wetlands should be restored to their former state and all non native species of plants removed. A wildlife sanctuary and an ecotourist site should be established there without damaging the wetlands ecosystem. There should be an interpretive center so that visitors and school children could learn more about the wildlife and plants.

I feel that if various agencies join forces, they can remove or eliminate the pollution from the beach and wetlands. A wildlife sanctuary at Ormond Beach would improve our economy, teach people about the wildlife and plants, and help preserve the wetlands. I have been to Ormond Beach on numerous occasions and have seen it when it was covered in trash. I feel that we have the honor to protect and preserve Ormond Beach and the wetlands for future generations to enjoy.